

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks, reconsideration of the claimed invention is respectfully requested.

The Office Action dated February 14, 2007 asserts that the amendments to Claims 1 – 5 are directed to a distinct and mutually exclusive species, and therefore the originally presented claims are constructively elected and the newly amended claims are withdrawn from consideration. As a result, no claims are currently pending in the application and therefore Applicants' Amendment of December 14, 2006 was non-responsive.

In a telephone conversation with the Examiner on March 7, 2007, the Examiner agreed to withdraw the restriction requirement if the Claims were amended to remove the step of forming a gradient in the felt layer. The Examiner also agreed to consider new Claim 6 in which the felt has a higher percentage of PBZ fibers in the region adjacent the OML surface of the felt than the region adjacent the IML surface of the felt. Support for new Claim 6 can be found, for example, on pages 6, lines 1 - 5. New Claims 7 – 10 are directed to the same subject matter of original Claims 2 - 5 and therefore are supported by the specification. Claims 1 – 5 have been withdrawn.

Originally filed Claims 1 – 5 were rejected as being unpatentable over the combination of several references. Specifically, Claims 1, 3, and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of U.S. Patent No. 5,296,288 to Kourtides et al., Sawko et al., *Effects of Weave Architecture on Aeroacoustic Performance of Ceramic Insulation Blankets* (1993), (hereinafter Swako), and U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0152769 to Kitagawa et al. Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Kourtides, Swako, Kitagawa, and U.S. Patent No. 4,151,800 to Dotts et al. Claim 4 was rejected unpatentable over the combination of Kourtides, Swako, Kitagawa, and U.S. Patent No. 4,255,817 to Hiem.

As discussed above, new Claim 6 recites the step of needling polybenzazole (PBZ) fibers and poly(1,3-phenylene isophthalamide) fibers into a first felt layer, such felt having an outer mold line (OML) surface and an inner mold line (IML) surface, wherein the felt has a higher

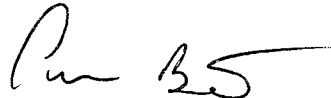
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percentage of PBZ fibers in the region adjacent the OML surface of the felt than the region adjacent the IML surface of the felt.

None of Kourtides, Swako, Kitagawa, Dotts or Heim disclose or suggest a method of fabricating an insulation having a felt layer comprising (PBZ) fibers and poly(1,3-phenylene isophthalamide poly(1,3-phenylene isophthalamide) fibers wherein the felt has a higher percentage of PBZ fibers in the region adjacent the OML surface of the felt than the region adjacent the IML surface of the felt. Accordingly, any combination of the cited references fails to teach or suggest the claimed invention. Thus, Claim 6 and any claims dependent thereon are patentable over the cited references, and it is respectfully submitted that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) have been overcome.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,



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